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TEAM FROM MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE VISITS JAPAN

A mission of four Russians from the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church has been visiting Japan. Calling at NCC headquarters on October 31, Bishop Juvenaly, vice chairman in charge of External Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate, emphasized the importance of ecumenical fellowship and cooperation in the mission field.

Bishop Juvenaly also discussed the invitation to delegates from churches in Japan to visit Soviet Russia next month. The following persons here been named: Rev. Atsumi Tasaka, vice chairman of NCC, Rev. Sakao Funamoto, United Church of Christ, Rev. Atsushi Sasaki, Japan Episcopal Church, Rev. Takenori Eguchi, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Dr. Takaaki Aikawa, Baptist Union, and Rev. Shuichi Matsumura, NCC executive committee.

Members of the Russian team, who accompanied Bishop Juvenaly on visits to the Japan Orthodox Churches in Tokyo and Hokkaido were Archpriest Arkadii Tyshchuk, Protodeacon Andrey Mazur, and Mrs. Nina Voblowa, interpreter.

TWO JAPANESE NURSES JOIN ACS IN VIETNAM

Two nurses who are to serve in Saigon, Vietnam, with the Asian Christian Service of the East Asia Christian Conference, were recognized in an evening service sponsored by the NCC and held at Shitaya Church, Tokyo, November 6.

The nurses, who left the following week for Vietnam, are Miss Tomi Kikuchi and Miss Tomoko Iida. A member of the Shitaya Church of The United Church of Christ in Japan, Miss Kikuchi has recently returned from three years' service at Rakusanin* Hospital in Taiwan, where she had been sent by the Japan Overseas Christian Medical Co-operative Service. She is an experienced nurse who has worked with the University of Tokyo Hospital, and, as an exchange nurse, at Columbus Hospital, Chicago. She has also studied at the Baptist Missionary Training School in Chicago.

Miss Iida has been working with the Agape Center for the Handicapped. Before going to Agape, she worked at the Kanbara Hospital, Shizuoka and at the Tokyo YWCA. She received her training at the Japan Red Cross Training School and is a member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

The service at Shitaya Church was attended by members of the two nurnes' churches and friend of the Japan Christian Medical Association. Rev. Mari Imai, chairman of the Women's Committee of NCC, preached.

* Japanese reading of the Chinese characters

JOINT PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC PRE-CATECHISM PROPOSED

In a letter addressed to the major Christian broadcasters in Japan, George L. Olson, director of the Tokyo office of the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service, proposed creation of a pre-catechism that "would establish the fundamental guidelines for bridging the chasm between the contemporary Japanese view of man and the Biblical one."

The letter, sent on October 31, the 451st anniversary of the Reformation, invited both Protestant and Roman Catholic communicators to act as "catalysts to bring about a more united witness to the 99 per cent of the Japanese who are outside the Church."

Mr. Olson pointed out the limitations of imported German and American theologies. "The average Japanese instinctively resists creedal formulas copyrighted in the West and peddled in the East with little adaptation to indigenous culture. The aesthetic feelings and thought patterns of the Japanese people require a unique approach from Christian communicators. If Christ needed a John the Baptist to prepare his way into the hearts of his fellow countrymen in Israel, how much more do we modern evangelists need to prepare Japanese hearts for the acceptance of a seemingly foreign Christ."

Commenting on the pre-catechism proposal, Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of the Japan Lutheran Theological College, said, "Churches have been thinking too much about their own members; therefore, cooperation between different churches has been difficult. By a serious consideration of people outside the Church, the churches will discover the basis for cooperation."

Father Joseph Spae, Roman Catholic Director of the Oriens Institute for Religious Research in Tokyo, who is known as an advocate of a distinctly Japanese approach to the Christian Gospel, has expressed his desire to cooperate.

Mr. Olson's went to officials at the Audio-Visual Commission of the National Christian Council (AVACO), the Lutheran Hour, Pacific Broadcasting, the Joint Broadcasting Committee of the United Church of Christ, and Sophia University.

The Japanese Lutheran leaders have urged the Broadcasting Service to call for consultation on the Christian approach to Japanese culture, and Dr. Horst Becker, foreign liaison officer for the German Federation of Lutheran Churches also urged further efforts to enlist Protestant and Catholic cooperation.

ASIAN CATHOLIC DOCTORS SUPPORT HUMANAE VITAE

Asian Catholic doctors voiced loyalty to the Papal encyclical Humanae Vitae and called for the establishment of more Catholic Medical Schools in the area during the four-day Congress held at Sophia University, Tokyo, October 10-13.

Catholic doctors from seven Asian countries joined their Japanese colleagues for discussion of common medical problems and Christian ethics. Deliberations dealt with the problems of sex education, social security and health insurance, the flight of medical personnel to more advanced countries, and public health in Asian countries.

Among the several conclusions and resolutions adopted were: 1) a reiteration of the Congress's filial loyalty to the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, with an expression of their abiding adherence to the magisterium of the Church, particularly on the Pope's recent encyclical letter *Humanae Vita*; 2) recognition of the serious need of a more enlightened and Christian-oriented teaching of sex education, carried out in a well systematized and prudently programmed educational effort to achieve the correct attitude toward sex.

Special Report

CHURCHES OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH IN JAPAN

by Akiko Yamaguchi

Among the early missionaries who came to Japan while the Christian faith still could not be proclaimed openly were persons sent by the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1861 Father Nicolas Kosatkin first landed in Hakodate, a port city on the northern island of Hokkaido. Seven years later, he baptized his first converts, including the kannushi, Takuma Sawabe. In 1872, Father Nicolas moved to Tokyo and, in 1891, completed the construction of the Holy Resurrection Cathedral, known today as the Nicolai-do. It is said that in 1904 there were about 30,000 Orthodox believers.

Throughout the unhappy circumstances of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, the Russian missionaries and the Japanese Christians maintained their fellowship, and the church continued its fellowship with other denominations. Following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the church became the independent Japanese Orthodox Church (Nihon Harisutosu Seikyokai). Yet Bishop Tihomieroff Sergie, who had come in 1907, remained in his position until the outbreak of World War II, retiring in Japan. Both Archbishop Nicolai and Bishop Sergie are buried in the Yanaka Cemetery in Tokyo, among the Japanese.

The events of World War II further isolated this church, as it did other denominations with overseas ties. And it brought about an unfortunate split in the church after the war.

In April 1947, the Japanese Orthodox Church voted to establish relationships with the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America and to request a bishop from the church in America. In 1956, five years after the Peace Treaty was signed between the United States and Japan, relationships between the U.S.S.R. and Japan were also restored, and Japanese believers began to hear again about the church in Russia.

In those days a few people decided to take out Soviet citizenship. Among them was George Minenko, who was born in Japan, the son of Russian refugees. Mr. Minenko, who is an active layman and presently secretary of the church, was one person who had a different attitude than did many others toward relationships between the Japanese church and Russia, although there were a few Japanese who, like him wished to have fellowship with the church in Russia. Among some of the older generation, the memory of the late Bishop Sergie was still very vivid, even though they disagreed with the political stance of his mother country. They were quite remote from the controversies over Communism and Christianity which flourished in the post-war Japanese church. Thus, eventually a small group, led by the late archpriest Makio Takai, separated from the Japanese Orthodox Church.

In 1957, the Synod Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church recognized the Magome Church and a small congregation in Hokkaido as under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Today the Japanese Orthodox Church, related to the church in America, has its headquarters in Nicolai-do, with about 9,000 members, 112 churches in Japan. The Japan Orthodox Church (Nihon Seikyokai), under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, with about 400 members is located in its new church building, St. Nicholas Church, in Magome, Tokyo.

At present there is a lawsuit pending over the possession of Nikolai-do. The Nicholai group insists upon the legality of their decision, after the war, to be related to the American Orthodox Church, but the Magome group claims that the decision was made under special circumstances, in which the Russian church could not contact the war-stricken Japanese Church.

Christians in Japan who know about the unfortunate division see hope in the fact that the Orthodox Churches in the East and the West are together in the World Council of Churches.

The Orthodox Church in Japan is a small group within the minority Christian community in Japan, but their situation reflects the political problem of a small nation placed between the East and the West.